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Breaking the Stained Glass Ceiling: Collaborative Leadership Theory as a Model for Women in Theological Higher Education

Mary E. Lowe, Ed.D.

One of the prevailing notions within American culture is the idea that women are prevalent in leadership positions within business, politics, and higher education. The reality, however, is that while women make up slightly more than 50% of the population, we are under-represented in these institutions. There are fewer than 20 female CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies. Women make up only 35% of the 2009 Congress and as of 2006 represented fewer than 10% of chief executive officers in theological higher education. The traditional views of theological higher education have been in favor of men but the reality is that more women are entering ministry and religious-oriented professions. The professional, political, and pastoral landscape is changing in favor of more women. The challenge facing institutions of theological higher education is the development of a model that is reflective of general trends. Much of the current data suggests that women tend to lead from an others-centered paradigm. One of the primary differences between men and women is that collaborative models of leadership characterize the latter. This article will examine collaborative leadership theory as a way of viewing female leadership in theological higher education.

I cannot say I think you are very generous to the ladies; for, whilst you are proclaiming peace and good will toward men, emancipating all nations, you insist upon retaining an absolute power over wives. But you must remember that arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken; and, notwithstanding all your wise laws and maxims, we have it in our power, not only to free ourselves, but to subdue our masters, and without violence, throw both your natural and legal authority at your feet (Abigail Adams as cited in Withey, 1981).

Introduction

The sentiment expressed by First Lady Abigail Adams' remarks suggests that power does not reside solely with men. Power, it seems, is arbitrary at best and liable to be broken at worst. The inconsistency noted by this president's wife is that one's desire to seek a peaceful world may not reflect the ability

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to collaborate with others. The pattern during the last two centuries reflects women's tendency to promote the welfare of others. "For over 200 years, the United States has been steered by male leadership who tend to lead from a "self centered, self-preservation" perspective. Women around the world are inclined to lead, their families *and* nations, from an 'other-centered' perspective" (Kitchen, as cited in Wilson, p. 5). Kitchen added, "we need a nation of "otherism" (p. 5).

Leadership Theories

For the purpose of this paper, I will examine collaborative leadership theory as a way of highlighting effective management and those who can make a difference. Historically, assumptions about male leadership traits have informed research on management theories. Moreover, many American institutions of higher education have propagated assumptions like this by hiring more men than women. The problem lies in the fact that since assumption feeds theory and praxis, studies in both male and female leadership have been lopsided. As Touchton and Shavlik (1978) observed, "the fact of greater numbers has fed the assumption of male superiority, an assumption that could hardly be substantiated since a comparison of two groups where only one exists cannot be made" (p. 95). Touchton and Shavlik charged that one of the underlying reasons for the imbalance was due to the homogeneity factor. To borrow a Biblical term, leaders tend to hire based on the desire to "create in our own image" or surrounding one's self with those who look, talk, and act the same as the leader. This allows for a safer and more secure environment of communication, development, and mobility. Touchton and Shavlik pointed to the 1978 study conducted by Socolow based on advertisements for college and university administrative personnel. He found that all the institutions except one, hired individuals within academia, 79% of those hired were from within the same geographical region, 73% accepted jobs within the same discipline, and 76% had prior connections to the institution. While no data based on gender or race was included, Socolow surmised that since, at the time of the study, more than 94% of presidents and 84% of administrators were male, it is likely that the hires followed similar patterns identified above. The need for conformity to homogeneity short-changes institutions on diverse views, potentially better ways of leading, and eliminating practices that are fair and just.

One difference can be observed in the way that both genders view matters of fairness. Gilligan (1982) noted that women approach ethics and morality from a relational model; men tend to pursue justice based on rules and a rights orientation. One way this affects leadership is that women tend to view their power and authority from an others-centered notion. The language Gilligan used embraced concepts identified with relational components of morality. She made the point (as cited in Bass, 1990) that "women focus on care and responsibility, while men are preoccupied with rights and justice" (p. 723). Gilligan reacted to Kohlberg's research in moral development, which focused solely on males. Kohlberg's application of justice links rules and moral reasoning largely to matters of law while Gilligan's view may be better understood within the realm of religion or theology. Kohlberg and Gilligan's approaches may not be as antithetical as one might think but rather they highlight two streams within which justice is actualized.

Another difference is the prioritization of responsibilities that men and women bring to the table. Shakeshaft (as cited in Grace, 1995) pointed to the distinctions inherent in educational leadership and management styles of women. She observed that women have a different set of priorities including interpersonal sensitivities, the quality of relationships, and a more democratic style of leadership. One group for whom this is apparent is clergy. Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang (1998) found that both genders think significant differences exist between male and female clergy leadership. They wrote, "many clergy believe that women clergy are more caring than men about the individual lives of members of the congregation, more pastorally sensitive, more nurturing and more likely to draw on personal experiences in preaching, teaching, and counseling" (§ 3). The consensus of those interviewed for the study conducted by Zikmund et al. was that "clergywomen are more relational than clergymen, making decisions more cooperatively instead of using a hierarchical or authoritarian approach" (§ 5).

These trends may also reflect cultural changes in which leadership is more democratic and egalitarian. Interestingly, there is a difference in leadership styles between the era in which a clergywoman attended seminary and one's age. Those who experienced the feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s report a greater likelihood of democratic leadership. However, Zikmund et al. reported that younger clergywomen currently serving in leadership roles display less collaboration or egalitarian ways of leading. They question whether younger women are feeling pressured to lead in a more authoritarian manner and whether or to what extent this departure from egalitarian leadership will backfire. One problem inherent in leadership studies is that traditionally, male leadership has been the norm for standards of behavior (Reimers, Barbuto, Matkin, 2003). The concern is that women may have internalized or attempted to imitate these male models of leadership and thus bypassed what

may be a more effective style of leadership. Women sometimes get caught in the crossfire of institutional and social expectations. Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (as cited in Reimers et al.) noted that, "the more [a woman] violates the standards for her gender, the more she may be penalized by prejudiced reactions that would not be directed towards her male counterpart" (p. 2). Bass (1990) pointed to the fact that organizational hierarchy is more important to men while women value networks or "webs of connection" (p. 723). Within this purview, men tend to extract themselves from those networks while women place greater definition of self in relation to others.

Another difference noted among men and women leaders is that the latter tend to be transformational in leadership style. Hassan and Silong (2008) describe this mode as "charismatic and visionary in nature, and leaders lead and motivate followers in ways beyond exchanges and rewards" (p. 362). Rosener (1990) reported that women tend to be transformational in their leadership styles because they are more interested in transforming a person's feelings of self-interest into what works best for the organization. Within this system, subordinates are encouraged to share in the power and participation structures rather than be self-serving. Rosener observed that men tend to display transactional leadership that involves patterns of behavior described as transactions or series of exchanges based on rewards and punishments. Subordinates view transformational leaders as more effective within the organization as well as contributing more positively to the company than transactional leaders (Bass, 1990). One comparison revealed a positive correlation between clergy transformational leadership and church growth (Bass, 1990). Similarly, company presidents who were considered transformational leaders generated higher profitability margins (Bass, 1990). Since women tend to have greater tendencies toward transformational leadership, organizations that promote female leadership stand a better chance of growth and success than the alternative.

The motivation behind transformational leadership is collaboration and socialization, which some ascribe as strengths particular to women. Bass (1990) included research suggesting that this trait could actually be a negative in that concern for socialization and interpersonal development can result in female leaders avoiding conflict resulting in poor leadership. Zikmund (1992) referenced this tension in her study of women administrators in theological higher education. The ability of these women to collaborate and seek consensus was realized sometimes at personal costs. The women in the study reported spending too much time listening to others, seeking to make everyone happy, and bringing everyone together. The women admitted that these tendencies might have placed unrealistic burdens on their leadership. That being said, most of the women interviewed by Zikmund argued that while there comes a time when one person has to make a decision, the process helps

them understand that there are limitations in leadership. However, they hold fast to the idea that their approach (collaboration) "is consistent with their understanding of Christianity" and report overall satisfaction by faculty and students in their leadership.

Comparisons of leadership styles point to tendencies by women to facilitate and encourage interaction among subordinates while men tend to focus on traits such as goal setting. Some women see successful leadership as an environment of peace and harmony while men define success as achieving personal goals and competition. In one comparison between leadership and collegiate sports, one observer noted that participation in athletics has given more women the opportunity to be heard on the corporate playing field. The emergence of Title IX laws in the early 1970s encouraged more women to become involved in collegiate sports, which affected leadership roles and styles. Plummer (1998) observed, "Athletics also teaches leadership. In a vision of leadership as teamwork for social change, sports can help train students to become change agents on and off campus" (§ 1). Plummer added to this by concluding, "leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in shared values of people who work together to effect positive change" (§ 4).

One leadership theory that has been field tested among business owners is the collaborative network orientation (CNO). The proponents of this theory argue that female managers tend to lead from a cooperative and networked orientation to business (Sorenson, Folker, Brigham, 2008). Moreover those companies that employ CNO strategies are more likely to succeed and experience greater profitability. One of the reasons for success is that through collaboration, women are able to establish a broader foundation of resources, connections, and contacts for business success. As such, "these networks enable women to acquire resources to meet business needs" (Sorenson, Folker, Brigham, 2008, p. 1). One factor that makes this work is the idea of holistic or integrative systems. Aldrich and Brush (as cited in Sorenson et al.) pointed out that, "women have the propensity to view the world holistically; they view business, family, community, and society as an integrated whole, not as a separate economic reality, as is the tendency among men" (p. 1). One of the components in most institutional ecologies is the stakeholder. These persons can have a powerful effect on an organization and the findings from Posner & Munson (as cited in Sorenson et al.) are that women place greater importance on these individuals than men do. It is likely that because of their ability to integrate networks and relationships, women benefit organizations more because of the higher value they place on relationships. While this may not necessarily be the exclusive domain of women, the literature suggests this approach is more feminine in nature. Sorenson et al. define feminine as the ability to connect to inside and outside-the-organization stakeholders us-

ing collaborative strategies, creating networks based on internal and external contacts, and establishing networks of teams within an organization. They summarize that “the glue that holds the networks together is collaborative leadership” (p. 2). Sorenson et al. found that the key to business success is the implementation of collaborative leadership.

One of the tendencies when comparing or contrasting men and women is to use language that is suggestive of superiority or inferiority. The scope of this paper is not to promote a culture of antagonism between genders but rather highlight differences and raise awareness of the disparity between what we preach and what we practice.

Leadership Trends

While American culture is beginning to experience more of a shift toward female leadership, there remains ground to cover before parity can truly exist. According to Wilson (2004), the United States ranks sixty-seventh in political leadership for women. She pointed to other statistics that suggest women are still far behind the pack in significant leadership roles. Wilson wrote that, “despite the enormous gains we have made in the last twenty-five years, the “cultural ideal” for a woman remains that of wife and mother” (p. xii). She sees an apparent lack of integration between work and home life. Zikmund (1992) echoed this view by noting that some in Western culture have not traditionally embraced equality for women, despite democratic practices and principles that shape and define us. She stated, “most Americans and Canadians believe that women’s sphere is appropriately different from that of men. Women should be more concerned with private and domestic life” (p. 63). The implication that emerges from statements like this is the well-oiled squeak that domesticity and leadership are worlds apart. The reality is that some women, who have navigated the private and domestic arenas, engage in positions of leadership, not only in our own country, but even more so across the globe. Perhaps if there were more people applying leadership styles such as open communication, collaborative engagement, and concern for the other—traits found in family and community based systems—organizations and institutions might look and function much differently.

Institutional Trends

Some statistics that support Zikmund’s (1992) observations emerge from the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), an international association of intentionally Christian colleges and universities. A study conducted by Schreiner (2002) revealed that nationally, women serve as Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in 25% of the field. Within the CCCCU however, only 19% of CAOs are women and only 2% serve as college presidents. The faculty positions in the CCCCU schools do not fare much better. Schreiner

reported that only 33% of faculty members within the Council are women and there is a greater degree of full professorship on the part of males than females, the latter serving as instructors and lecturers. Disparity applies as well to rates of tenure and doctoral positions. Schreiner (2002) concluded that women at CCCU schools are "paid significantly less than males and less than females at other schools, even after controlling for rank and experience."

These trends also materialize in theological education reports according to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Statements from their web site define ATS as, "The Association of Theological Schools is a membership organization of more than 250 graduate schools in the United States and Canada that conduct post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and for teaching and research in the theological disciplines" (2007a, p. 1). Their reports revealed that as of 2006, only 22% of the full-time teaching positions included women. ATS indicated, "Although the actual number of women faculty has grown by 6 percent over the last five years; the relative percentage of women faculty has remained about the same" (2007b, p. 11). The reality for most theological schools is that administrator hiring usually comes from within the organization and specifically from the faculty base. The women interviewed by Zikmund (1992) believe that the best presidents are those who have served previously as faculty. It stands to reason therefore that theological schools would be best served by hiring more female faculty members. The female faculty to female student ratio is also imbalanced. As will be noted in the following section, female students comprise approximately one-third of all enrollment in American colleges and universities whereas female faculty appointments fall at less than 25%.

Student demographics do not fare much better at ATS schools. While the numbers of women in theological schools have increased, as of fall 2006, they were only 34% of the overall student enrollment and constituted 31% of the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program. Not surprisingly, women constitute 54% of the non-M.Div. degree programs and are the minority in all other degree programs. According to Aleshire (as cited in Dart, 2003), Executive Director of ATS, the presence of women in theological schools is not representative of graduate education overall where women represent nearly half of all students in professional degree programs. Despite these figures, one of the most dramatic changes in the theological landscape has been the enrollment of women (Chopp as cited in Foster, 2002). Zikmund (1992) reported that in some schools, enrollments of women have doubled and tripled.

Administrative positions within ATS member schools also reflect these general trends. There are 22 women listed as CEOs, which include presidents, rectors, principals, and deans of university related schools. Fewer than 10% of the Chief Executive Officers of ATS schools are female (T. Lewis,

personal communication, June 19, 2009). Although dated, reports from a 1991 ATS directory listed 21 women (10%) as either a president or chief academic officer of member institutions with the conclusion that “top female leadership in theological education is very recent” (Zikmund, 1992). It appears that in the 17 years since Zikmund’s findings, rates of female leadership within the ATS have taken a slightly downward turn. Reasons for the change in momentum are unclear but every effort should be made to level the playing field for leadership opportunities in theological higher education.

These figures are not unique to theological higher education. Zikmund reported that as of 1989 the number of female presidents in American higher education was 10%. While the figures have doubled in recent years, a study conducted by the American Council of Education (ACE) revealed that as of 2006, 77% of university presidents are male (Carol, 2007). In similar fashion, figures from a 2001 ACE study revealed that representation of women as presidents of colleges has doubled since 1986 to 21% (O’Connor, 2004). The caveat of that figure is that most of these women are at two-year schools and/or liberal arts colleges. Another report by the ACE concluded that only nine percent of private and doctoral-granting schools have women as presidents.

Congregational Trends

These trends are reflective not only of higher education but are part of clergy life as well. In a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life, Garcia (2009) reported that women in American religious denominations are more active in their faith than men. She noted, “86% [of Christian women] are affiliated with a religion, 77% have absolute belief in a God or universal spirit . . . and 44% attend worship services at least weekly” (p. 1). For Garcia, one of the most surprising findings was that women (66%) report that they pray daily (compared to 49% of men). One of the factors for this discrepancy between men and women is that the latter tend to be more relational which may pave the way for a more active faith (Gallup as cited in Garcia). Garcia noted that women are more involved and associated with Christian groups including both Protestantism and Catholicism more so than non-Christian religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Based on this data, one might conclude that women are more active in clergy leadership roles within Christian denominations. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Stange (2009) wrote that “some of the largest organized religious groups in the country show the picture is at best mixed when it comes to women’s ability to break that stained glass ceiling” (p. 11A). She concluded that the irony between the numbers of women who are actively engaged in religious life and those not in leadership is too significant to ignore. The fact is that “the Pew data highlight the cruel irony that in far too many religious contexts in this country, women remain second-class citizens” (Stange, p.

11A). It is a fair argument that in an institution that exists to cultivate a relationship between persons and God, women who are generally considered to be more relational, should be involved in leadership roles that allow them to nurture and cultivate the most important relationship.

Cultural Trends

While these numbers may cause concern for some, it is worth noting that things are changing in various sectors of public life. Helgesen (1999) noted that women are coming into their own by taking on positions of power and influence both in the business and public venues. She observed that this is due in part from the tendency by women to create their own destiny rather than wait for one to be created *ex nihilo*. Helgesen's views regarding the relationship between work and home (as if to suggest the latter does not include work) resemble Wilson's (2004) in that "women are often most affected by the breakdown of barriers between work and home, and by the changing relationship between organizations and employees" (p. 134). She made the point that the strides women have made outside the home, or her term "social revolution" have been because women have reinvented their place in society. Women, who make a comeback to the workplace after taking time to raise families, are often more self-confident and demonstrate greater self-awareness. The return of women to the workplace has also caused a shift in training and education. Helgesen noted that "women are the largest consumers of outside training, whether public seminars, college courses, or personal development programs" (p. 136). She sees a greater degree of self-directedness on the part of women to become more educated, more trained, and more influential. As women continue to insist on breaking the mold of what a leader is or should look like, the more likely it is change will continue to shape economies, organizations, and churches.

Collaborative Leadership

One of strengths that women bring to the emerging cultural shift is the ability to be collaborative. Norris (as cited in Carol, 2007) pointed out that women are typically encouraged to be collaborators and facilitators. She sees this as a strength of leadership which provides women with unique perspectives that might otherwise be missing in a typical corporate structure. Some of the findings from the literature reveal that women are more collaborative and engage in cooperative strategies more often while in leadership (Aldrich & Brush as cited in Sorenson et al., 2008). Wajcman (as cited in Sorenson et al.) found that women "tend to be collaborative, cooperative, and participative" (p. 2). This allows them to approach business from a more democratic and participative approach. This view requires a paradigm shift within our traditional approach to leadership.

One of the principal voices in this area of study are Chrislip and Larson (1994) who described collaborative leadership in terms of outcome and particular components. Traditionally, leadership has been described from the point of view of personal attributes or characteristics. We are now seeing a shift from individual-centered leadership to an others-centered perspective. Chrislip and Larson (1994) defined collaborative leadership as an ability to articulate a vision and inspire subordinates to share in and enact that vision.

One of the hallmarks of effective collaborative leadership, according to Chrislip and Larson is the ability of the leader to “guide rather than control, motivate rather than direct” (as cited in Carter, 2006). Their view is very much like Knowles’ (1990) understanding of adult education and one’s preference for facilitation rather than hierarchically ordered teaching. Some have ascribed to Knowles the “guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage” mode of teaching. This approach reverses the typical hierarchy of leadership to one that is others-centered and more broadly based. The premise of Chrislip’s approach is that collaboration requires collective wisdom of the group rather than the unilateral perspective of the individual. Similarly, Knowles advocated for the collective base of shared experiences that adults bring to the learning environment. This approach, in Knowles’ view, creates a much more dynamic learning process and allows the adult to find relevance and meaning in the classroom. Allen (as cited in Claremont, 2004) described collaborative leadership as “a way of working with others in a group rather than a set of personality traits that an individual needs to gain a position of authority” (§ 1). She sees this shift in thinking as an emergence from environmental and social change movements. Working collectively allows for a greater possibility of change because the power structure resides in groups of people rather than a single entity. The focus is no longer on the individual, which then maximizes the potential and importance of the many. The playing field levels in this scenario and it allows for the implementation of egalitarianism.

Actualizing these new forms of affiliation is through cooperative ways of leading. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Andover Newton Theological Seminary noted:

It is interesting to observe that collaborative action is very in fashion right now—from leadership styles to grant proposals. I think we are moving into a more genuinely cooperative way of doing business—and that is a good thing. In addition, I would say that collaboration is a strategic tool for women in leadership to include themselves at the highest level of decision-making. I have found in my position that it is not strategic to be a lone ranger. (P. Deck, personal communication, April 4, 2009)

It seems that what Deck has observed about collaboration is true across the spectrum of leadership. Heisenberg (as cited in Senge, 1990)

clarified the importance of collaborative learning when he articulated “. . . collectively, we can be more insightful, more intelligent than we can possibly be individually. The IQ of the team can, potentially, be much greater than the IQ of the individuals” (p. 239). Senge pointed out that there is currently a much greater need for team building in order for organizational learning to occur. He added that the crucial decisions being made in organizations today are done so at the team level and it is this dynamic that sets the standard for how the rest of the organization will react.

Benefits of Collaborative Leadership

According to some literature regarding leadership styles, there is a correlation between competitive and collaborative approaches and corresponding job performance, satisfaction, and company loyalty (Bass, 1990). Subordinates view self-centered and assertive leaders as competitive or more willing to engage in conflict. These same leaders are also described as “more likely to accept being marginal in a role” (Bass, p. 303). Role marginalization reflects a need for less socialization. These types of leaders tend to be introverted, prefer to be task-oriented, and have fewer interpersonal skills (Bass). Alternatively, those who lead with a concern for others and yet are assertive tend to reflect more collaborative traits. Blake and Mouton (as cited in Bass, 1990) describe the ideal leader as “both assertive and concerned about others. They deal with conflict by integrating conflicting ideas through collaborative problem solving” (p. 303). One of the strengths of collaborative leadership is the ability to resolve differences because of the ability to network and create teams that work together (Sorenson et al.).

In a study conducted by Kabanoff and O'Brien (as cited in Bass, 1990), the particular task or group structure will determine in part the type of efficiency needed by the leader. In those groups that need coordinated leadership (working on tasks determined by the leader), the competence of the leader is very much at hand. However, those groups who are collaborative (self-directing in determining task order) have little need for a task-competent leader. The implication is that those groups who work collaboratively tend to promote one another as leaders rather than identifying one key individual as the decision maker. The leadership wealth spreads among the workers who can easily adapt to new and changing duties. Bass pointed out that:

for an organization to be sufficiently adaptive to meet environmental demands, it is necessary for its members to be willing and able to perform more than one function or to perform the same function in a variety of ways to meet changing circumstances (p. 623).

We know this is also true in education as evidenced by Astin's (as cited in Arendale, 1998) comments:

The most important thing about collaborative learning is that it facilitates the development of teamwork skills and encourages the individual student to view each classmate as a potential helper rather than as a competitor. Under it, students learn to work together toward common goals (p. 100).

Additional findings of this study yielded other outcomes of collaborative learning such as enhanced self-esteem, higher retention rates, higher levels of interest in course work, and increased development of interpersonal skills (Arendale, 1998). He noted that institutionally, there was a positive relationship between collaborative learning and increased participation in university activities, greater appreciation for the university, and increased participation by minority groups in campus functions. Collaborative learning has been a part of the educational landscape for decades. One working definition of collaborative learning as it applies to adult education is that “collaborative learning mobilizes the social synergy that resides within a group of co-learners engaged in dynamic process of shared inquiry. . . . Active engagement and ongoing reciprocity create a community of co-inquirers” (Lee, 2000, p. 109). Lee observed the dynamics of verbings in her study of collaborative learning and its role in shared inquiry. Students referenced active verbs in their descriptions of the learning process. Lee concluded that the process of shared inquiry adds “color and depth to collaborative learning communities” (p. 110). If this is true in the educational venue, it should also be true across the spectrum of life’s activities. Collaboration yields a greater sense of involvement and can add depth and color to one’s leadership as well.

Similar views echo in the corporate world. Hays (1999) interviewed the vice president of a human resource company and reported that women will benefit most from collaborative leadership models. Sims (as cited in Hays) observed that, “historically, women have been excluded in a lot of the cases on the power side of industry, so they’ve accomplished a tremendous amount through collaborative leadership skills and consensus building” (§ 8). Sims contrasted hierarchical and collaborative leadership models and believes the former will not be conducive to organizational structures in the future. This belief is based in part on the idea that information is instantly accessible and the workforce will have to adapt to quicker forms of mobilization. One of the ways to accomplish this is through collaborative forms of teamwork and interactivity. Tjosvold & Weicker (as cited in Sorenson et al., 2008) cite reports that business owners who are able to connect with others through cooperative measures and coordinate functions within an organization are more likely to experience success than those who do not. Other literature supports this view and provides that collaborative networked orientations yield higher growth, expansion of business resources, and ultimately organizational success (Garney as cited in Sorenson et al.).

Another benefit is higher rates of satisfaction within church settings. Wallace (1993) highlighted rates of increased membership and financial contributions by Catholic parishioners who experienced collaborative leadership. The context of the article was the comparison between female pastors (appointed by the bishop to serve in the absence of a priest), male priest pastors and the construction of collaborative leadership models. Wallace found that those congregants who were encouraged to become actively involved in the administration of the church experienced an increase in participation rates and financial contributions to the parish. Cooperative engagement also resulted in changed attitudes by the parishioners toward their female pastors. One result of collaborative leadership was "parishioners in these parishes experience a growing sense of empowerment and of community" (Wallace, 1992, p. 7).

One outcome of collaborative learning is the matter of community building. In the earlier reference to the study conducted by Lee (2000), her research subjects indicated that the collaborative process of learning became relational. She referenced one participant who observed that, "[collaborative learning] is learning in communities. It is a relationship that exists between the content matter, the community of learners and the teacher" (p. 111). The idea underscored by these observations is the nature of reciprocity in the learning process. One participant noted that there was a great deal of *one-anothering* that occurred in the classroom experience. That student wrote, "Our common purpose is to find wholeness in life. . . . We learn from each other. There should be one anotherness and togetherness" (Lee, p. 111). The implication for the community of learners in collaboration with each other is the reciprocity that exists in shared learning. Lee noted that, "the repetition of "together" conveys the reciprocal nature of communal learning" (p. 111). One should understand that collaborative learning as a way of life becomes an intrinsic way of navigating all of one's activities. Lee concluded, "the compelling appeal for collaborative learning approaches is that it is a philosophy of interaction and personal lifestyle, and not just a classroom technique" (p. 111).

A Christian Model of Collaboration

For those in theological education, appeal to sacred scriptures to explain or offer theological rationale for pursuing a certain course of action is commonplace. When it comes to models of collaboration, theological educators have another approach found in the Christian New Testament that one may integrate with social science insights.

The Greek New Testament uses the term *allēlon* over one hundred times. It is what Greek lexicographers call a "reciprocal pronoun." Most often in English translations of the Greek New Testament this word is translated "one another," or "each other." While there are exceptions in usage, the word *allēlon*

“is used in connection with groups of persons who are in some way peers and with reference to relationships within a homogeneous group in order to express communication with or, sometimes, negative conduct toward, each other” (Krämer, 1990, p. 63). The word *allēlon* expresses concepts like mutuality, reciprocity, equality, sharing, and exchange. The description “reciprocal pronoun” suggests that lexicographers understood the term to convey a relationship between two or more people who were committed to one another. The relationship is interactive with each person contributing to the welfare of the other through a variety of connections, behaviors, attitudes, and actions. The key to all of this is social exchange. One person does not perform all of these behaviors for others but everyone adopts an *allēlon* perspective with the net result that everyone benefits holistically from the interaction. All of this mutual (reciprocal) social exchange serves as a precipitating mechanism for further growth and maturation in all dimensions of one’s person. The leaders of the Christian church encouraged a collaborative relational style that governed all interpersonal relationship and church leadership. This way of relating within the Christian community St. Paul summarizes eloquently when he writes “with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:2–3).

Benefits of Reciprocal Collaboration

Developmentalists have identified reciprocity as a critical component in normal human development toward maturity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005). One may define reciprocity as the interaction between and among developing persons. The interactions take a variety of forms and take place in a variety of social settings. A developing person is any human at various stages of the lifespan who engages in social interactions with other developing humans. The social interactions that occur between developing persons serve as instigators of development that prompt further development in all parties involved in the exchange.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that reciprocity is one of the chief properties that characterize dyadic interaction leading to further human development. The consensus among developmental social scientists is that without such social reciprocity between and among developing persons, normal human development is impossible. Whereas older views of development gave more weight to either nature (innate biological patterns that govern development) or nurture (social environmental conditions), work that is more recent has seen that both components are necessary for humans to develop normally. Thus, a reciprocal relationship between these two critical elements is necessary. Developmental reciprocity encompasses relationships that emerge in dyads, triads, and other forms of social networking. Without

these reciprocal interactions and social relationships between persons we impede normal human development. Gilligan (1982) addressed this issue of relationships as they relate to human development. She identified studies of interactions between children and the differences that emerge during play. Girls have a much easier time engaging in social reciprocity than do boys and they seem more attracted to dyads or more intimate groups rather than larger clusters. Gilligan noted, "this play [best-friend dyads] replicates the social pattern of primary human relationships in that its organization is more cooperative" (p. 11). Lever's (as cited in Gilligan) work links patterns of boy behavior to rules of the game rather than relationships. Girls abandoned rules in favor of preserving relationships. Those patterns of behavior tend to inform decisions and patterns of interaction in later years as well. One of the observations by a number of presidents of theological schools is that the leader of these types of institutions must be capable of nurturing relationships both inside and outside the school. One-anothering, it seems, does not end at the elementary playground but continues to be a part of lifelong engagement.

Women as Leaders

The reality is that women are growing to be a dominant force in the cultural landscape. They are shaping business, educational institutions, and religious organizations throughout the United States. Wolfe (n.d.) reported that between 1997 and 2006, female owned businesses doubled compared to all U.S. firms. Moreover those companies owned by or majority-owned by women accounted for nearly 10 million privately held firms which translates into 40% of all businesses in the U.S., and generated \$1.9 trillion in sales and more than 12 million people employed (Wolfe). Sims (as cited in Hays, 1999) believes that those companies who engage in collaborative models of leadership are the ones that will be able to respond best to changing market conditions. Hierarchical structures that often impede response and mobilization will not sideline these companies. Avery (1999) believes the workplace of the future will be "cross-functional" which will challenge all of us to "practice collaborative leadership skills" (p. 37). In the future market, organizations that are ill-equipped to handle those who are self-directed and self-aware are likely to struggle for relevance (Helgesen, 1999). As noted earlier, women are re-entering the workplace and are often defining their own contributions to that market place. Helgesen stated that, "more than one-third of all small businesses are now owned by women" (p. 139) and are on the cusp of some of the best innovations and market growth indicators for years ahead. Not surprisingly "women are leading this social shift, in part because working women have traditionally conceived of their identity as more broadly determined than simply what position they hold in the workplace" (Helgesen, p.

140). One of the tendencies reported in some of the literature is to create a false dichotomy between success in business and relationship development.

Benefits of Female Leaders in Theological Education

Sorenson et al. (2008) make a persuasive case that just the opposite is true. They are able to demonstrate through their study that women have greater propensities to lead collaboratively, create networks, engage in cooperative relationships that bring together all constituencies, and maintain positive relationships. Moreover, they demonstrate that those organizations engaging in what they consider feminine approaches to leadership (described above) are likely to experience success. They argue that, “the feminine view is that the world is a network or web of relationships and that those relationships must be preserved” (Bird & Brush as cited in Sorenson et al.). If our institutions of theological education are going to succeed, it is imperative that they consider leaders who are relationship builders, place high value on networks, and intuitively seek to bring others in to the organization. Women, as has been argued by Sorenson et al. are bridge builders and have a natural inclination to establish a broad range of networks who in their role as either internal or external stakeholders, have the potential to impact significantly the institution for good. “Collaboration seems to capture the manner in which women establish relationships in networks” (Sorenson et al, 2008, p. 1).

Ummersen (as cited in O'Connor, 2004) believes that women in positions of leadership in higher education “are able to work in a collaborative fashion and share leadership responsibilities” (§ 13). She believes this is important because there are typically more women enrolled in higher education than men and she understands that the presence of female presidents of colleges and universities would send a signal that women students can and should set their sights higher.

Conclusion

The ATS (2007a) has defined a theological school as a “community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity” (p. 3). Cannell (1999), describing the ATS standards, observed, “Theological schools are communities of faith and learning guided by a theological vision” (p. 18). Haddad (2003) noted that theological schools should be about the business of adequately preparing Christian leaders to face the demands of their world. The Christian principle of collaborative reciprocity as it relates to leadership cannot be actualized if one of the key players is not at the table.

Some in theological higher education however, feel caught between a rock

and a hard place. It seems clear from the literature that collaborative models of leadership work to enhance the potential of all it serves. It also seems reasonable that there is sufficient theological precedence for collaborative reciprocity in relationships and leadership. Why then do we struggle with the notion of not only collaborative forms of leadership but also promoting those who engage in collaborative practices best? Zikmund (1992) believes that part of the problem lies in the fact that seminaries tend to pattern themselves after universities and colleges which, as this paper has demonstrated, have traditionally failed to level the playing field between men and women in leadership. Moreover, she believes that seminaries are too heavily influenced by traditional Judeo-Christian views of women in leadership. She states, "in spite of egalitarian theology rooted in the conviction that we are all creatures of a common Creator, the habits of theological education remain highly patriarchal" (p. 56). It seems we do not practice what we preach.

Collaborative models of leadership serve to empower and strengthen the people led as well as the institutions and organizations served. The literature points to a body of research that affirms women's capabilities of leading collaboratively. Buchanan (1996) argues that women in leadership have the opportunity to shape American values rather than taking the blame for their erosion. She urges women to choose to lead rather than remain passive recipients of modern culture. Those institutions, including theological educational schools that embrace these emerging realities, are the ones who will lead the twenty-first century.

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